

HN16 RUDENKO

BY CHARLES H. KLENSCH

MOSCOW, JULY 23--(INS)--SOVIET AIR MARSHAL S. I. RUDENKO SAID TONIGHT THE REASON SOVIET PILOTS WERE NOT ORDERED TO SHOOT AT ALLEGED AMERICAN PLANES WHICH REPUTEDLY FLEW OVER WESTERN RUSSIA WAS BECAUSE THE SOVIETS DID NOT WANT TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL TENSION.

RUDENKO MADE THE STATEMENT TO WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS AT THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY IN MOSCOW. HE WAS ONE OF NEARLY A DOZEN SOVIET MARSHALS TO ATTEND AN EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES DAY RECEPTION AT THE EMBASSY.

THE SOVIET DEPUTY AIR FORCE CHIEF SAID THE AMERICAN PLANES, ALLEGED TO HAVE "INVADED" SOVIET AIR SPACE IN EARLY JULY, WERE FLYING AT EXTREMELY HIGH ALTITUDES AND COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED BY MARKINGS.

HE SAID THEY WERE TOO FAR AWAY FROM SOVIET FLIERS WHO SPOTTED THEM FROM THE AIR.

BUT RUDENKO ADDED:

"OUR FLIERS KNOW AMERICAN AIRCRAFT TYPES."

ASKED WHY THE RUSSIANS DID NOT SHOOT AT THE ALLEGED AMERICAN PLANES AS THEY HAD DONE IN THE PAST OVER THE SEA OF JAPAN AND IN THE BALTIC, RUDENKO REPLIED:

"OUR AIRCRAFT HAD INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO SHOOT. YOU KNOW WHAT OUR POLICY IS NOW -- TO AVOID SHARPENING INTERNATIONAL TENSION."

RUDENKO ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT EACH SUCH CASE WOULD BE DECIDED INDIVIDUALLY. SOVIET FLIERS WERE ORDERED TO CONTACT HEADQUARTERS FOR INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FIRING.

RUDENKO SAID HEADQUARTERS FOR INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FIRING.

RUDENKO SAID HEADQUARTERS WOULD DECIDE ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS:

"IF IT IS A CASUAL VIOLATION OF SOVIET BORDER AIR SPACE, THEY HAVE INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO SHOOT. BUT IF IT IS DELIBERATE AND CONTINUOUS, THEY WILL ACT ACCORDINGLY."

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, RUDENKO WAS ASKED, IF THE PLANES THE RUSSIANS THOUGHT WERE AMERICAN FLEW OVER AGAIN.

HE REPLIED:

"YOU SAW WHAT THE NOTE (TO WASHINGTON) SAID -- IT WOULD BE AMERICA'S RESPONSIBILITY."

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